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ABSTRACT

Claiming that politicians, private interests, and the media unfairly blame adolescents for America's social problems, this book explodes various myths about teen pregnancy, violence, and risk behaviors. The chapters are: (1) "Impounding the Future," examining trends in various social indicators such as rising rates of child poverty versus declining rates among the elderly, declining school funding versus rising prison populations, and poverty rather than age or race as the biggest factor in violent crime rates; (2) "Fertility Bites," highlighting how the media and policymakers ignore the fact that most teen mothers were impregnated by adult males rather than teen peers; (3) "Breeding Doomsday?," on the role of teen pregnancy in shaping welfare reform attitudes and policy; (4) "Wild in Deceit," noting that attitudes and policy concerning youth violence do not take into account the role of adult-on-child violence; (5) "Nicoteen Fits," noting that the greatest tobacco danger to children and youth are the smoking habits of adults but that the current administration blames youth smoking on industry advertising and on peer pressure; (6) "Doped on Duplicity," exploring the attitudes of the adult generation toward teen drug use, and the outcomes of the misguided "War on Drugs"; (7) "Two-Fisted Double Standards," on teen alcohol use, exploring the effects of teen prohibition, and noting that, policy and attitudes to the contrary, teen and adult drunk driving death rates follow parallel patterns; (8) "Growing Up Referred," refuting the "innately at risk" theory by which social and health scientists have defi the period of adolescence and manufactured a concomitant treatment industry; and (9) "Generation Y," suggesting change strategies to reverse attitudes a policy that have abandoned youth, such as reducing child and teen poverty, and reducing age-based laws that unfairly restrict adolescent opportunity, employment, and freedom. (Contains extensive notes for each chapter.) (HTH)